

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a composite material comprising mixing at least
2 one natural fiber, at least one ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin, and at least one functionalized
3 ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent to provide said composite material; wherein said
4 functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent possesses a molecular weight distribution
5 of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin that is
6 grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of
7 functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent.

1 2. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is selected from the group
2 consisting of wood flour, wood fiber, and agricultural fiber.

1 3. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is selected from the group
2 consisting of wood flour, wood fiber, hemp, flax, and kenaf.

1 4. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is employed at a level in the range
2 of from about 20 to about 85 weight % based on the total formulation weight of the composite
3 material.

1 5. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the base ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin
2 is grafted with a total of more than about 5 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams
3 of functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent.

1 6. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the base ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin
2 is grafted with a total of more than about 10 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams
3 of functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent.

1 7. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin is a
2 polypropylene copolymer comprising a major proportion of propylene combined with a minor
3 proportion of a second monomer selected from the group consisting of ethylene and C₄-C₁₆
4 monomer materials.

8. (Deleted)

1 9. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin is
2 polypropylene homopolymer.

10. (Deleted)

1 11. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the polar monomer is selected from the group
2 consisting of ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acids, ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid
3 anhydrides, and derivatives of the foregoing.

1 12. (Original) The process of claim 11 wherein the polar monomer is selected from the group
2 consisting of maleic acid, fumaric acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, acrylic acid, methacrylic
3 acid, maleic anhydride, itaconic anhydride, substituted maleic anhydrides, and derivatives of the
4 foregoing.

1 13. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the polar monomer is maleic anhydride.

1 14. (Currently Amended) A composite material prepared by a process comprising mixing at least
2 one natural fiber, at least one ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin, and at least one functionalized
3 ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent to provide said composite material; wherein said
4 functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent possesses a molecular weight distribution
5 of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin that is
6 grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of
7 functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent.

1 15. (Currently Amended) A composite material comprising at least one natural fiber, at least one
2 ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin, at least one functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling
3 agent, and at least one lubricant selected from the group consisting of fatty acid amides and fatty
4 acid esters; wherein said functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent possesses a
5 molecular weight distribution of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base
6 ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene resin that is grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least
7 one polar monomer per 100 grams of functionalized ~~polyolefin~~ polypropylene coupling agent.